



Early Childhood Nutrition and Physical Activity

e-Bulletin

Fall 2021

Dear Colleagues:

Health and wellness begin early in life when children are learning and forming behaviors they will take with them into adulthood. Implementing policies and practices that support a healthy child care environment is a crucial step in ensuring the health of Connecticut's youngest residents. The Department of Public Health, in collaboration with a variety of stakeholders, has developed this e-Bulletin to provide resources to assist early care and education programs in creating healthier environments that support early learning and development.



CT Grown for CT Kids Week & National Farm to School Month



[National Farm to School Month](#) is celebrated across the country each year during the month of October. It's a time to celebrate food education, onsite gardening, and children's plates filled with healthy, local ingredients. In Connecticut, we celebrate [CT Grown for CT Kids Week](#) during the first week of October to show support for our state's own local agriculture; to celebrate our teachers and early care and education (ECE) providers who make gardening and other learning opportunities possible for

youth; and to acknowledge our community's commitment to the importance of providing nutritious, local foods in schools and ECE programs statewide. Please join us in celebrating *CT Grown for CT Kids Week, October 4-8th*, with some of the activities listed below!

Food and Family



Create a family recipe book to share. Invite your families to share a recipe with an ingredient that is in season. Fall is full of bounty and many cultures celebrate this time of year with seasonal fruits and vegetables!



Cooking in the Classroom

Use local apples. Make applesauce with these [sample recipes](#) (for large or small classrooms!) and pair it with this [apple exploration curriculum](#).

Fall in the Garden




Learn in the garden. Get your garden beds ready for the winter by adding compost and leaf mulch to the soil. Create a [Garden Scavenger Hunt](#) where the kids search for worms and notice how plants and their leaves are changing in the fall. Get messy with this fun [soil art](#) activity or search for insects with this [simple guide](#).

What's in Season?


Connecticut's relatively mild climate and fertile soils allow for its long growing season and variance in agriculture. The harvesting season in Connecticut generally lasts from mid-April to mid-November. Some of the first crops of the season include various greens, such as spinach, collards, and salad greens, while crops such as apples, cherries, peaches, pumpkins, and pears are harvested later. Find out what's in season on the [Connecticut Grown Crop Availability Calendar](#) or using the below guide!

WHAT'S GROWING IN CT?


Eating Seasonally in Early Childhood Education & K-12 Schools




FALL



WINTER




SPRING



SUMMER

FALL			WINTER			SPRING			SUMMER		
early	mid	late	early	mid	late	early	mid	late	early	mid	late
kale	mixed greens	apples	kale	winter squash	potatoes	kale	mixed greens	carrots	carrots	summer squash	corn
mixed greens	apples	mixed greens	potatoes	potatoes	apples	carrots	carrots	apples	carrots	summer squash	corn
apples	carrots	winter squash	potatoes	potatoes	apples	carrots	carrots	apples	carrots	summer squash	corn
carrots	beets	carrots	potatoes	potatoes	apples	carrots	carrots	apples	carrots	summer squash	corn
beets	potatoes	carrots	potatoes	potatoes	apples	carrots	carrots	apples	carrots	summer squash	corn
potatoes	pears	potatoes	potatoes	potatoes	apples	carrots	carrots	apples	carrots	summer squash	corn
pears	winter squash	kale	potatoes	potatoes	apples	carrots	carrots	apples	carrots	summer squash	corn
winter squash	kale	dairy	potatoes	potatoes	apples	carrots	carrots	apples	carrots	summer squash	corn
corn	corn	dairy	potatoes	potatoes	apples	carrots	carrots	apples	carrots	summer squash	corn
summer squash	dairy		potatoes	potatoes	apples	carrots	carrots	apples	carrots	summer squash	corn
green beans			potatoes	potatoes	apples	carrots	carrots	apples	carrots	summer squash	corn
dairy			potatoes	potatoes	apples	carrots	carrots	apples	carrots	summer squash	corn



PUT LOCAL ON YOUR TRAY

FARM TO SCHOOL

CSDE
CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

UConn
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, HEALTH AND NATURAL RESOURCES
EXTENSION

Each product is listed from most available to least. Dairy is available year round!

putlocalonyourtray.uconn.edu

Bring locally grown into the classroom.

Have a taste test with the children after reading the Two-Bite Club book. The Two-Bite Club book is [available as a free PDF or eBook](#) and can help you encourage the children to try new things!





Make a Connection with a Farmer Near You!

Making a connection with a local farmer is a great way to support your program and locally grown. Not sure how to get started? See the below tips and suggestions to start an introductory conversation.

Farm to School Directory

[Put Local on Your Tray](https://putlocalonyourtray.uconn.edu/farm/) has a Farm to School Directory for purchasing directly from farms. These are farms that are interested in hearing from schools: <https://putlocalonyourtray.uconn.edu/farm/>.

Visit a [farmers' market](#), [pick your own farm](#), or [farm stand](#).

- Introduce yourself and share your interest in bringing local products your site.
- If a farm is selling directly to retail, you can see the quality and condition of their products.



What are you asking for? Start small and grow from there!

- Look at what products are in season and notice the pricing.
- Do you want to buy enough for the children to have a meal, special snack, a taste test activity? Have a sense of how much you would want to purchase.
- Know your budget. Farmers are willing to discuss pricing based on crop availability and seasonal produce at peak harvest can yield a good deal!

Get out to the farm.

- Ask if they host field trips or would be interested in hosting one.
- Invite local farmers to lunch and visit with your program to sample the foods you prepare. Seeing your program in action and meeting the students will further your relationship.

Questions to ask the farmer:

- Ask about their farm story? What growing philosophy do they have?
- Do you sell products in bulk? Can you make a mixed box of products?
- What payment options do you have (would they send an invoice rather than COD)?

Be ready to share your contact information and follow up!

- Contact farmers in the early morning or evening since many are in their fields or marketing their crops during the day.
- If you leave a message, indicate when is a good time to call you back and if you have a direct phone extension.



Family Engagement



Engage Families with Farm to ECE

Family engagement is central to ECE quality. Everyone benefits when families are involved in education: children, the family, and the program! Farm to ECE can be used as a tool to promote successful family partnerships. Hosting family events, communicating frequently, and engaging family members during drop off and pick up are just a few ideas! Read more [here](#) to learn how to use farm to ECE to engage families.



Farm to ECE Module – Go NAPSACC!

Join Go NAPSACC to Increase Farm to ECE Opportunities

There are so many benefits to participating in the Go NAPSACC program. Providers receive a variety of resources to help encourage and increase farm to ECE opportunities. The resources provided include **child size shovels gardening tools, books, planting resources, and more.** In addition, child care providers have access to a training and technical assistance consultant and are eligible for a \$100 American Express gift card at the end of their project, while supplies last. Register for the Farm to ECE module [here](#). If you already have a Go NAPSACC account, please contact your Go NAPSACC consultant to get started!



Contact Us!

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